

- 1481 *Homoeosoma sinuella* (Fabr.) – Penmon (**52**) 14.vii.96 – SHH, PPRS
 1483 *Phycitodes binaevella* (Hübner) – Frenchpark (**H15**) 9.vii.96 – KGMB
 1484 *P. saxicola* (Vaugh.) – Linkim Shore (**81**) larva on *Tripleurospermum maritimum* 22.viii.95 moth bred – KPB, BJENH
 1485 *P. maritima* (Tengst.) – Kingsthorpe (**32**) 9.vi.96 – P.D. Sharpe per DVM
 1486 *Apomyelois bistratella* (Hulst) ssp. *neophanes* (Durr.) – St Agnes, Isles of Scilly (1) 5.ix.96 – J. Hale; Skipwith Common (**61**) 3.ix.96 – HEB, *Ent. Rec.* **109**: 212–213

PTEROPHORIDAE

- 1496 *Cnaemidophorus rhododactyla* ([D. & S.]) – Holywell, Eastbourne (14) reared from larva 15.vi.96 – MSP
 1502 *Platyptilia isodactylus* (Zell.) – Ashmoor Common (**37**) larvae in stems of *Senecio aquaticus* 21.vii.96, moths bred 7-12.viii.96 – ANBS; Lough Cutra (**H15**) 22 & 23.vi.96 – KGMB
 1506 *Stenoptilia millieridactyla* (Bruand) = *saxifragae* Fletch. – Bearsden (**99**) larva 30.v.96; Strathbane (**86**) larvae 29.v.96; Kirkby Lonsdale (**69**) larvae 4.vi.96, all on *Saxifraga hypnoides* – CH; Dalby Forest (**62**) 27.vi.96 – HEB
 1509 *S. pterodactyla* (Linn.) – Hunting Hill (**106**) 22.vii.96 – KGMB
 1511 *Merrifieldia tridactyla* (Linn.) = *fuscocolimbatus* (Dup.) – Frenchpark (**H15**) 9.vii.96 – KGMB
 1512 *M. baliodactylus* (Zell.) – Ford (**7**) 3.vii.95 – E.G. & M.H. Smith, BJENH
 1519 *Euleioptilus carphodactyla* (Hübner) – Ford (**7**) 21.vi.94 – E.G. & M.H. Smith, BJENH

Pieris napi L. and *P. rapae* L. (Lep.: Pieridae): *Cardamine hirsuta* as a basic larval foodplant in north-west Kent

A considerable growth of hairy bitter cress *Cardamine hirsuta* flourished in parts of my garden during July and August 1997, providing a fresh salad vegetable, I was tardy in removing it. For much of July, *P. napi* females were observed attending the plants for egg-laying, along with the occasional *P. rapae*. In mid-August some clearance took place and several well-grown larvae including both species, but mainly *P. napi*, were shaken from it. In this context this plant is not mentioned by Chalmers-Hunt (1960. *Butterflies and Moths of Kent*), L. and K. Evans (1973. *A Survey of the Macro-lepidoptera of Croydon and N.E. Surrey*) or Plant (1987. *Butterflies of the London Area*).

C. hirsuta was hardly in evidence when the vernal generation of butterflies was flying, but then females were observed egg-laying on lady's smock *C. pratensis* on the somewhat neglected lawn in an adjacent garden; this plant was introduced some thirty years ago when the lawn was laid with turves from the Weald. However, in general this plant is absent or rare in north-west Kent. Philip (1982. *Atlas of the Kent Flora*) and Burton (1983. *Flora of the London Area*) mark it as absent from my

tetrad and a number of others. *C. pratensis* is considered the main larval foodplant of *P. napi* in Hampshire by Goater (1974. *Butterflies and Moths of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*) and particularly the first generation in Scotland by Thomson (1980. *The Butterflies of Scotland*). My observations suggest that this plant is the main larval foodplant of the vernal generation of *P. napi* in Co. Clare, Ireland.

Despite *P. napi* being a common butterfly in Kent and the London area, records of its larva being observed are sparse and most of those are given without reference to date, which is important because foodplant preferences may change with time. Not uncommonly there are preferences of a local or geographical nature, sometimes due to the absence of a plant but frequently not so; in the case of bivoltine species there may be different preferences for the generations, and there seems to be some evidence that this is so with *P. napi*. In many parts of the British Isles *C. pratensis* may well be the favourite, or one of the main, larval foodplants for the vernal generation, but I have not found larvae of the later brood upon it; nor records from other sources. On the other hand I have found the second brood larvae to be associated with *C. hirsuta* and *Rorippa sylvestris*, though not the first generation, in north-west Kent; again I can find no such specific observations from other sources. In Kent and the London area especially information on this subject would be most welcome because the relevant recorders accept that larval foodplants should be reported, and to include date and locality.— B.K. WEST, 36 Briar Road, Dartford, Kent DA5 2HN.

Thanatosis in *Inachis io* (L.) (Nymphalidae)

In July 1983, on a visit to Bentley Wood and Blackmoor Copse near Salisbury, it was discovered that *Gonepteryx rhamni* (L.) (Pieridae) could be picked off flowers on which they were feeding and placed on an open hand like a wafer, where they would remain inert often for several minutes. Picking them off flowers was most easily accomplished by a gentle pincer movement of the index finger and third digit. Almost invariably, the butterfly responded by becoming rigid with its legs tucked up under its body, as illustrated in Dennis (1984. *Entomologist's Gazette*, **35**: 6-7). Similar experiments on *Inachis io*, carried out at the same time, were unsuccessful. Although, initially, they responded in the same way, they burst into flight when released on the hand.

During early August 1997, this simple experiment was repeated with *I. io* feeding on garden *buddleia*. Of 23 individuals picked off flowers while feeding, 17 became immobile on the palm (74%), whereas six burst into flight immediately on release. All but five of the individuals undergoing thanatosis were encouraged back to activity after five to ten seconds by raising the wing tip. Five were taken into the shade to return to activity in their own time; respectively, these took 1.30 mins; 2.35 mins; 8.15 mins; 6.20 mins and 5.05 mins to recover. On leaving, they rapidly attained an upright position, opened their wings, alternatively spreading and closing them as they walked about and casually flew off to settle on nearby bushes or the *buddleia* before recommencing to feed. Shade temperatures were very high during this period and no attempt was made to bask before flight. In late August and early